

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
LA \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Nerd Landia

By Gary Soto

## STUDY GUIDE

DESCRIBE THE REFERENCE MATERIALS THAT YOU FIND ON PAGE 86. HOW CAN THESE HELP YOU?

Look at the title and front cover of the play. Make a prediction about what you think this play is going to be about.

**Setting:** Where and when does this scene take place?



Draw a picture of Martin, based on his description on p.1



DESCRIBE IN TWO STEPS HOW JOAQUÍN AND MARTÍN BECAME FRIENDS:

What's the cause of Martin's *la jeta*?

## SCENE 1: (CONTINUED)

What does the word *triste* mean in English? sad



excited



scared



sleepy



Describe Ceci from the point of view of a *vato*.

Name two reasons Martin is afraid to ask Ceci out:

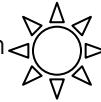
Internal Fear

External Fear

What does the word *corazon* mean in English? happy



sun



heart



light



On p. 5, Freddie reveals that he's next in line for a job "**washing dishes in a Chinese Restaurant. I'm going to carry on the family tradition.**" What is Joaquin's response to this news?

What does this reveal to you about the social pressures and concerns these characters seem to have?

DESCRIBE  
THE STEPS  
IN THE  
PLAN TO  
MAKEOVER  
MARTIN

## SCENE 2

Write the reasons Ceci says she's attracted to Martin, even though her girlfriends find him objectionable?

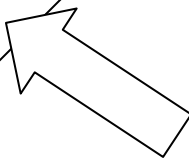
What are some not-so-nice words that the girls use to describe guys?

Describe Lupe's experience with vatos:



What do Ceci's feelings for the "nerd" suggest about her character?

How did Ceci resolve her dispute with Sleepy?



List the three examples of humor so far in the play.

*Describe Ceci's plan to "snag" Martin*

## SCENE 3

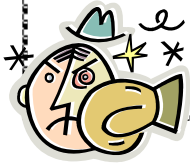
**Setting:** Describe the location where this scene takes place:



What's happened to this place? Describe the mood\*\*:

\*\*Mood is the effect of the author's words on the reader's feelings.

Why is Sleepy so willing to let Martin go out with Ceci, although he still considers her his girlfriend?



**What is ironic\*\* about the "fortunes"?**



\*\*Irony is when the opposite of what you expect happens.

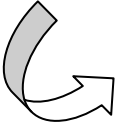


As the characters move thru La Raza, they reminisce about their childhoods. What clues does this place give to the economic conditions in their lives?

Describe one of your favorite childhood places:

## SCENE 3 (CONTINUED)

Give 3 examples of when the boys misuse words. What effect does Soto achieve with this literary technique?



How does Martin change once he replaces his "nerd" clothes with a gang outfit?

How is this metamorphosis humorous?



How does Ceci's alteration parallel Martin's?

In what ways is her transformation the opposite of Martin's?



Lupe claims that *'you can take la chola out of el barrio, pero you can't take el barrio out of la chola.'*

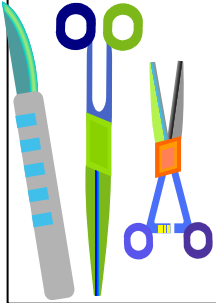
What is Soto suggesting about the effect of setting on character?

How has your neighborhood affected who you are? (Like who your friends are, what activities you do, things you say, places you go, etc.)



## SCENE 4

Describe the “operation” that the boys perform on Martin. Include the elements that they add to his character.



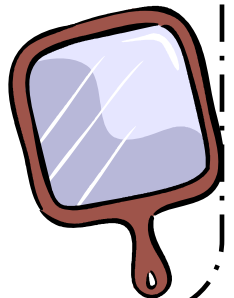
How does Martin’s speech change after the transformation? Give two examples:



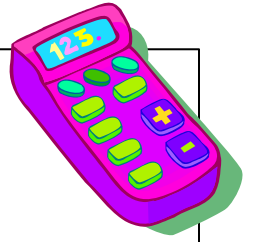
What causes conflict between Ceci and her friends after her transformation?

**Why are Ceci and Martin attracted to each other after their transformations?**

Do you think that Ceci and Martin would have become a couple if either or both of them had not remade themselves? Give at least 2 reasons to support your answer.



## SCENE 5



Why do the other boys want to become nerds? What is humorous about their decision?

WHY DON'T CECI'S GIRLFRIENDS RECOGNIZE MARTIN?

HOW DOES THIS MISTAKE IN IDENTITY ADD TO THE PLAY'S DRAMATIC TENSION?

Martin tells Susana and Lupe, **I was invisible to you two, all because I was different.** What conflicts and emotions is he voicing here?

IDENTIFY THE PLAY'S CLIMAX (THE POINT OF GREATEST TENSION):

WHAT CONFLICT IS RESOLVED HERE?

WHAT NEW CONFLICTS ARE CREATED?

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

What statement do you think Gary Soto is making about:

Identity and heritage?:

Appearance?

Social class?

School achievement?

IMAGINE THAT *NERDLANDIA* WAS SET IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD INSTEAD OF THE FRESNO BARRIO. HOW WOULD THE SETTING CHANGE THE STORY? USE EXAMPLES FROM THE PLAY AND YOUR LIFE.



I would give *NERD LANDIA* this rating: (Fill in the number of stars)

WORST THING I EVER READ 

AWESOME, I HOPE TO READ MORE BOOKS JUST LIKE IT.

I would recommend this play to \_\_\_\_\_ because: